

WEB 5-20-15 Daily Breeze

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Program will train in spotting sex trafficking

The county Board of Supervisors voted Tuesday to spend \$250,000 on a program to train staffers and community partners to identify victims of child sex trafficking.

Supervisor Don Knabe, who championed the program, said the Probation Department has already

trained 7,000 people to recognize risk factors and spot the warning signs of exploitation.

"This money will ensure that we're able to train another 8,000 people next year," he said.

On Friday, Knabe will join Metro officials to launch the agency's "Don't Be Silent" campaign, urging Metro riders to be alert to suspicious activity on trains and at stations.

Women who look fearful or depressed and are being closely watched by someone else may be a victim, the campaign tells riders. Signs of physical abuse or malnourishment are other indicators.

Those who believe they spot someone who might be a victim of human trafficking are asked to call 888-950-SAFE (7233).

— City News Service

DAILY BREEZE

Winner of the 2015 Pulitzer Prize

Serving the South Bay since 1894

Friday, May 15, 2015

\$1.00

FACEBOOK.COM/DAILYBREEZE

TWITTER.COM/DAILYBREEZENews

Former undersheriff accused
of blocking FBI probe into
abuse of L.A. County inmates



Former
Undersheriff
Paul Tanaka
has pleaded not
guilty to the
charges.

TANAKA INDICTED IN JAIL COVER-UP



Acting U.S. Attorney Stephanie Yonekura announces the indictment and arrest of former Los Angeles County Undersheriff Paul Tanaka.

By Sarah Favot

sarah.favot@langnews.com

@sarahfavot on Twitter

A federal obstruction and conspiracy probe into corruption and abuse in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department jails reached the executive level Thursday with the indictment of former Undersheriff Paul Tanaka and a former captain.

"The Sheriff's Department was involved all the way up to the second-ranking member of the de-

partment," said Acting U.S. Attorney Stephanie Yonekura in announcing the indictments at a morning news conference in downtown Los Angeles.

Tanaka was second only to former Sheriff Lee Baca, who is "not charged at this time," Yonekura said. She added that Tanaka ran the day-to-day operations at the jails.

"Tanaka had a large role in institutionalizing the illegal activities in the Sheriff's Department," she said.

Officials said they would con-

tinue to consider all evidence and would extend their review to include any possible wrongdoing by Baca.

Several deputies who served under Tanaka were convicted last year for the obstruction of a federal investigation into corruption and abuse in the county's downtown jails. The indictment unsealed Thursday claims Tanaka and former sheriff's Capt. William Thomas Carey, both 56, orchestrated the misconduct.

TANAKA » PAGE 8

MORE COVERAGE

Inside: Paul Tanaka goes on leave as Gardena's mayor during the case. **PAGE A8**

Online: A look at how the Sheriff's Department got here and what's next in the case. **DAILYBREEZE.COM**

INDICTMENT

Paul Tanaka will take leave as Gardena mayor

By Sandy Mazza

sandy.mazza@langnews.com
@sandymazza on Twitter

Gardena Mayor Paul Tanaka announced Thursday that he will take a leave of absence from City Hall while he fights federal charges that he obstructed justice while working as second in command at the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

But colleagues say his loss will be felt in the community he has called home for five decades, where the problems he faces with federal prosecutors seem a world away.

"He's probably one of the nicest people I've ever worked with in the whole political realm," said longtime City Council colleague

Tasha Cerda. "He does what he says. People in Gardena don't just like him, they love him. He's been in leadership management for a long time, and here in Gardena it shows very well."

If Tanaka is convicted of a felony, he will be forced to leave office permanently, City Attorney Peter Wallin said. Until then, it's legal for him to hold onto his part-time elective position.

"Mr. Tanaka will ask the City Council for an excused leave of absence as he deals with these legal matters, and he hopes to remain on the elected panel to continue to fulfill his responsibilities to his fellow citizens as the case against him proceeds," City Manager Mitch Lansdell said in a written state-

ment Thursday.

"Importantly, these charges arise from allegations that have absolutely nothing to do with his work on behalf of the city of Gardena. Both as a city councilman and mayor in a city he has called home for 50 years, Mr. Tanaka has been an effective elected official and a strong advocate for Gardena citizens — and we know he will continue to be. We will have no further comment."

Gardena, a largely bedroom community of 62,000 people roughly 13 miles southwest of downtown Los Angeles, is an ethnically diverse suburb with large contingents of Japanese-American and Korean-American residents.

There, Tanaka won his third mayoral term in March 2013 without campaigning, beating out a longtime councilwoman with strong support despite the controversy surrounding him over his role as Los Angeles County's undersheriff. At the time, the FBI was investigating the Sheriff's Department over reports of inmate abuse. As undersheriff, Tanaka was in charge of the budget and the jails.

Tanaka launched a bid for sheriff in hopes of replacing his former boss, Lee Baca, and qualified in June 2014 for a runoff against Long Beach Police Chief Jim McDonnell. But the FBI investigation weighed like an anchor around his campaign and he was pummeled at the

polls in November.

Tanaka, who is also a certified public accountant, was first elected mayor of Gardena in 2005 after serving on the City Council for six years. In 2006, he helped City Manager Lansdell negotiate a debt repayment schedule that prevented the city from filing bankruptcy. The previous city manager, who went to prison after he was caught embezzling money, had left behind \$26 million in debt from two failed programs.

Since then, the city has delivered consistently balanced budgets and managed to save millions in an emergency reserve fund.

His colleagues say Tanaka's steady leadership, strong budgeting skills and

calm demeanor on the council have shaped his reputation in the city through three terms as mayor.

"I'm under the assumption that the old adage of 'innocent until proven guilty' is the situation," Councilman Dan Medina said. "He's been a good steward as far as the City Council is concerned. He's on the finance committee, and the city's finances have come a long way."

"He attends ribbon cuttings, meetings, even funerals," Medina said. "He knows how to keep our meetings really concise. I've seen other city councils run with drama and name-calling and finger-pointing. I can honestly say he stops that from happening."

Tanaka and Carey, who headed the internal criminal investigations in the jails — “the very unit that was supposed to root out” corruption, according to Yonekura — pleaded not guilty Thursday afternoon to charges of conspiring to obstruct justice and obstructing justice. Carey also pleaded not guilty to two perjury charges. If convicted, Tanaka would face a maximum sentence of 15 years. Carey faces 25 years.

Tanaka, who appeared in federal court in a blue shirt and black sports jacket, was expected to post his \$50,000 bond with a deed to a condominium in Diamond Bar. Carey, in a white dress shirt and dark slacks, was released on \$100,000 bond. Trial proceedings are scheduled to begin July 7.

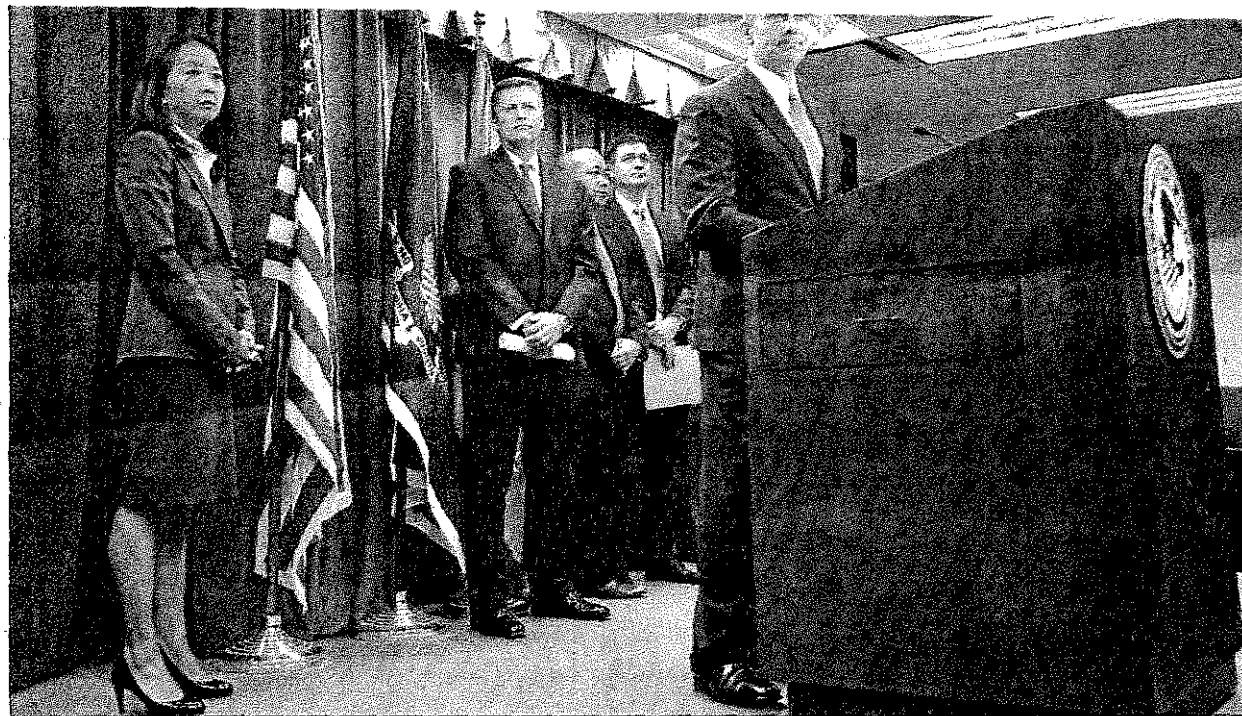
Tanaka's wife, who is a Sheriff's Department detective, attended the arraignment.

Tanaka's attorney, H. Dean Steward, called the charges “baseless” and said he will “aggressively” defend the charges.

“Mr. Tanaka dedicated himself to serving the residents of Los Angeles County honorably, ethically and legally,” Steward said in a statement. “After all the facts come to light, we are confident he will be exonerated of any wrongdoing.”

Tanaka retired in 2013 with a payout close to \$600,000 from earned vacation and sick pay. He receives an annual pension of \$199,748. He also has served as mayor of Gardena since 2005, although on Thursday he asked the City Council for an excused leave of absence to tend to his legal defense.

Carey left the department



BRAD GRAVERSON — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

FBI Assistant Director David Bowdich outlines the federal charges of conspiracy to obstruct justice during investigations into misconduct at L.A. County jails on Thursday.

mer U.S. Attorney Thomas P. O'Brien, declined comment.

Hector Villagra, executive director of ACLU of Southern California, called the indictments a “sad, but necessary, reminder of the Sheriff's Department's history of condoning violence.”

“Both men have done immeasurable harm to the department's reputation and undermined public trust in the very agents who are supposed to serve and protect the public,” he said. “The indictments clearly indicate just how much work the Sheriff's Department has to do to rebuild the public's trust.”

Between August and December 2011 Tanaka and Carey allegedly gave orders and oversaw actions that obstructed an FBI investigation into civil rights violations in the jails where deputies allegedly beat inmates.

bribes.

Carey allegedly ordered deputies to confront an FBI agent, who was investigating the abuses, at her home to intimidate her and told her that her arrest was imminent, according to the 25-page indictment. Carey also allegedly ordered surveillance of two FBI agents who were investigating the Sheriff's Department.

Tanaka and Carey allegedly ordered Anthony Brown, who is identified as “AB” in the indictment, to be moved from Men's Central Jail once they discovered Brown was an FBI informant. Tanaka allegedly met in a parking lot with deputies who were assigned to pose as Brown's cellmates who were being abused by deputies to glean what information Brown had given to the FBI. Deputies allegedly told employees in the records center they were un-

when they asked the employees to create false entries to show Brown had been released from custody and rebooked under various aliases so the FBI couldn't track him and so that he couldn't testify before a grand jury, according to the indictment.

Yonekura said Tanaka was told 10 years ago about “rampant abuse” in the jails. Still, Tanaka believed that the number of investigators in the internal criminal investigations bureau, which investigates complaints, should be cut from 45 to one, Yonekura said.

Yonekura noted that the Sheriff's Department, now headed by Jim McDonnell, has made significant steps toward changing the culture of misconduct.

“This case is not an indictment of (the Sheriff's Department), but a cadre of employees influenced by superiors,”

Bowdich said at the morning news conference.

McDonnell, through a spokeswoman, declined to comment on the indictment. The spokeswoman said the sheriff sent an internal memo to his employees Thursday morning and was focused on “looking forward.”

“These indictments were expected due to the seriousness of the allegations,” Supervisor Michael Antonovich said in a statement. “When some members of the Sheriff's Department hide an inmate from the FBI and then attempt to arrest an FBI agent, those responsible must be held accountable.”

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas said the indictment showed the need for “strong civilian oversight” of the Sheriff's Department.

“We must have transpar-

Thomas said. “Everyone is innocent until proven guilty and we will respect the legal process. But no one is above the law.”

Tanaka launched a losing bid for Los Angeles County sheriff in 2014. He squeaked into the primary with 15 percent of the vote but lost in the November runoff against McDonnell after garnering just 25 percent or about 309,000 votes.

McDonnell, who took over as sheriff in December, is a former Long Beach police chief and worked for the Los Angeles Police Department.

Tanaka and Carey are the eighth and ninth sheriff's department officials to face criminal charges in the case involving the obstruction of the FBI probe. The initial indictments came out a year and a half ago.

Six former sheriff's department officials — two lieutenants, two sergeants and two deputies — were convicted in 2014 for their roles in the cover-up. They received sentences ranging from 21 to 41 months, which they have appealed.

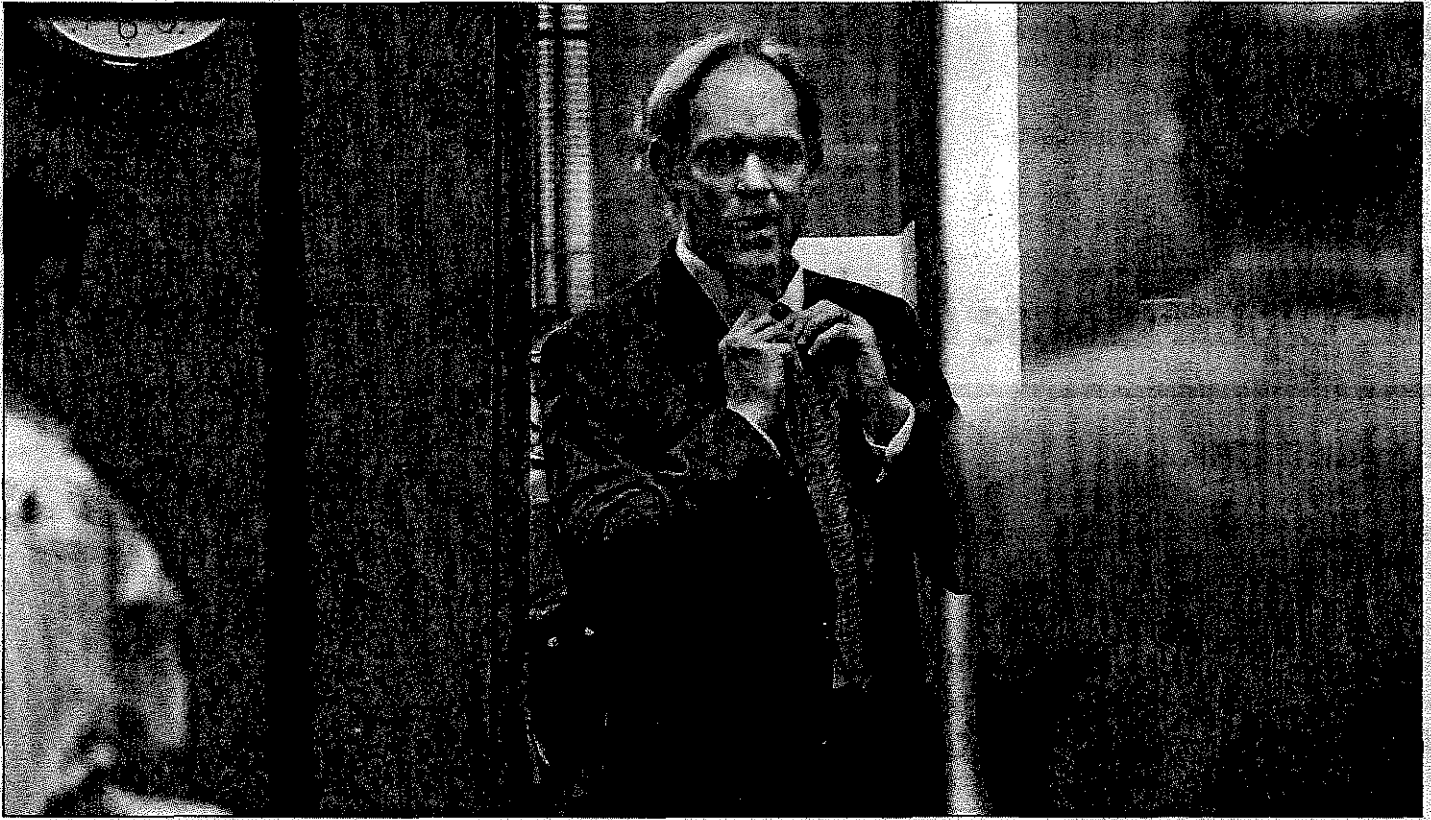
All claimed they had been following orders in assisting a legitimate investigation into how and why a cell-phone had been smuggled into the Men's Central Jail.

A citizens commission formed in 2011 to investigate violence in the county's jails blamed Tanaka for some of the abuses at the jails, citing evidence that he urged deputies to be aggressive and “function right on the edge of the line” or “work in the gray area,” somewhere between what is legal and what is not.

— Staff writer Dakota Smith contributed to this report.

RANCHO PALOS VERDES

FATHER GUILTY IN GIRL'S CLIFF DEATH



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cameron Brown, a 53-year-old former airport baggage handler, adjusts his tie as he enters Los Angeles Superior Court on Wednesday to hear the jury's verdict after his third trial on charges he threw his 4-year-old daughter from a Rancho Palos Verdes cliff on Nov. 8, 2000.

After third trial, jury convicts Cameron Brown of throwing his 4-year-old daughter off Inspiration Point

"It's been a long time. It's been 15 years and finally we have justice for Lauren."

— Deputy District Attorney Craig Hum

Staff and news services

A third jury to hear the murder case against Cameron Brown convicted him Wednesday of first-degree murder for throwing his 4-year-old daughter from a Rancho Palos Verdes cliff nearly 15 years ago to extract revenge on her mother and avoid child support payments.

Brown showed no emotion as the verdict was read in Los Angeles Superior Court, while the mother of Lauren Sarene Key breathed heavily and began crying in the gallery.

The jury deliberated about 1 ½ days before returning its verdict against the 53-year-old former airport baggage handler, who has been in jail for nearly 12 years in connection with his daughter's death on Nov. 8, 2000.

The panel of six men and six women also found true the special circumstance allegations of murder for financial gain and murder while lying in wait, which carry a mandatory life prison



COURTESY PHOTO

Family photo of Cameron Brown and his daughter, Lauren Key

Brown

FROM PAGE 1

term without the possibility of parole.

Brown is set to be sentenced June 19 by Judge George G. Lomeli. Asked about the sentencing date, he said: "Judge, I'm innocent; I have no comment."

Two previous juries that heard the evidence against Brown deadlocked, with all 24 of those jurors indicating they believed he was guilty but unable to agree on whether he should be convicted of first-degree murder, second-degree murder or involuntary manslaughter.

The first jury to hear the case deadlocked in Torrance in August 2006, with eight panelists favoring a second-degree murder conviction and two each lobbying for first-degree murder and involuntary manslaughter. In 2009, six jurors in a downtown Los Angeles courtroom voted in favor of convicting Brown of second-degree murder, while the other six favored involuntary manslaughter.

"It's been a long time. It's been 15 years and finally we have justice for Lauren," Deputy District Attorney Craig Hum told reporters. "In the other prior trials, no juror has ever voted not guilty. It was only a matter of degree, and it was obviously very good news for us that they all managed to agree on this verdict."

In a statement, defense attorney Aron Laub said he "argued for a verdict of involuntary manslaughter because I sincerely believe that is what happened in this case. I have great confidence in our jury system, but I cannot agree that this was a just verdict."

Jury foreman Greg Apodaca said the panel, which on May 7 visited the Inspiration Point site where the girl plunged to her death, wanted to acknowledge those who had "invested several years in this case."

"We appreciate the ev-



CHUCK BENNETT — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A plaque resides on a cliff in the Portuguese Bend area of Rancho Palos Verdes for Lauren Key. Her father, Cameron Brown, was convicted Wednesday of first-degree murder for throwing Lauren off the 120-foot cliff nearly 15 years ago.

idence they provided for us to consider ... and feel we have delivered justice," he said. "Well, the experts made it pretty clear, and when we did the site visit, it was clear to us, as well. It didn't seem likely that a 4-year-old girl would be up there of her own volition."

Speaking directly to the girl's mother, another juror, Sheila Janis, said, "I'm sorry for your death of your baby, but justice has finally been served. All the evidence was there."

The girl's mother, Sarah Key-Marer, told reporters she was in shock and wanted to thank the jurors and the witnesses.

"All I ever wanted was that he would take responsibility for what happened that day, so I'm thankful for God for carrying me and my family and my friends through this time," she said. "Lauren was our gift from God, the best thing that ever happened to us."

Atop the 120-foot cliff where Lauren plunged to her death is a large rock with a memorial plaque containing Lauren's picture. Hum said Brown tossed the girl off that cliff out of hatred for her

mother.

"I think it's very clear that the main motivation for the defendant in this case was just revenge," the prosecutor told reporters after the verdict. "He hated Sarah so much that he was willing to go to these lengths to get back at her. Obviously, the financial motive was a factor, but it was primarily his hatred of Sarah, of Lauren's mother, that propelled this."

The prosecutor told jurors that Brown unsuccessfully tried to persuade Key-Marer to get an abortion when he first learned she was pregnant and subsequently tried to have her deported. Hum told the panel that Brown showed no interest in meeting his daughter until she was more than 3 years old and that Brown was advised he needed to request visitation if he wanted a reduction in the monthly child support payments of about \$1,000 that he had been ordered to pay.

Hum told jurors it was "clear that Lauren did not slip and fall," but was picked up and thrown off the cliff to her death. The prosecutor questioned Brown's statement to in-

vestigators that he "could barely keep up with this 4-year-old little girl" when she led them to Inspiration Point, which is unfenced.

Brown's attorney countered that the girl fell to her death in a tragic accident and denied that his client had any hatred for the child's mother.

"Unfortunately, with custody issues, this is sort of business as usual," he said of his client's filing of a false police report of abuse against Key-Marer and reports that the girl was crying when Brown came to pick her up from school that day.

In wrapping up his closing argument Monday, Laub attempted to guide jurors toward a guilty verdict on a lesser charge of manslaughter, reading out the charge in full before saying it should be given "serious thought."

"This father, who had this duty to hold her hand or hold her ... didn't do it," the defense attorney said. "Honestly, I have a hard time seeing a not guilty (verdict). ... I am looking for what is justice."

Brown has been jailed without bail since his arrest in November 2003.

Oversight panel must have right to subpoena

Los Angeles County residents took big steps to reform the Sheriff's Department last November by electing Jim McDonnell and two new county supervisors who would approve permanent civilian oversight.

Cleaning up abusive law-enforcement agencies requires the public to assert its authority — the people's power to police the police. Which is why an upcoming decision about the exact authority of the newly established civilian oversight commission is so important.

For the Sheriff's Department oversight commission and inspector general to do their jobs right, they must have the power of the subpoena. They must have the legal ability to compel testimony from officers and witnesses. They must be able to get their hands on agency records and documents and other evidence vital to investigations of, say, allegations of deputy misconduct.

They must always be able to find out what the public needs to know about the operations of the nation's largest sheriff's department — even, or *especially*, when the men and women behind the badges don't want them to.

The decision on whether to grant subpoena power might ultimately rest with voters, who would have to approve a change in the county charter. But first, it would have to be approved by the Board of Supervisors. The supervisors are supposed to hear this month from a working group assigned to make recommendations about the commission's makeup and function.

It's encouraging that, in nine town-hall meetings held by the working group, L.A. County residents have been speaking up for subpoena power. And that Max Huntsman, the Sheriff's Department inspector general who is a member of the working group, is a strong proponent of subpoena power.

What could be the argument against it? There is one — and

it only underscores the need for it.

Sheriff McDonnell, while supportive of the civilian oversight commission approved in December with the help of new Supervisors Sheila Kuehl and Hilda Solis, is against giving it subpoena power. So is the deputies' union.

McDonnell and some others say subpoena power would create an adversarial relationship between the panel and a sheriff who has promised to cooperate with his overseers. Meanwhile, union members see a threat to their privacy.

Clearly, McDonnell was the best man for the job of leading the Sheriff's Department back from the scandal-ridden last years of Lee Baca, years symbolized by the convictions of a half-dozen deputies for interfering with a federal civil-rights investigation of jailhouse misconduct. But McDonnell is not infallible. He can't control all 18,000 department employees. He won't be sheriff forever, and the next one may not be as cooperative.

Smart policy can't be based on faith in one public official. Especially when the goal is to protect the public from law-enforcement abuse, the people's right to know must not be restricted. A series of police brutality cases around the nation reminds us of what's at stake.

For the same reasons that the Los Angeles Police Department's inspector general was given subpoena power following the 1998 Rampart scandal, the people watching the Sheriff's Department have it after this confidence-shaking mess.

Tell the working group and county supervisors to take this important next step toward reform.